

Update on the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Mailing: "Important Information from Medicare about Paying for Prescription Drugs."

On May 20, 2005 CMS began mailing notices to approximately 4.5 million people who are eligible for both Medicare and Medicaid and 1.3 million people who get help from Medicaid paying their Medicare premiums. These notices let them know that they automatically qualify for extra help with their Medicare prescription drug plan costs. These individuals do not have to apply to receive the extra help, but will get it automatically. (Attached are a spreadsheet showing the total number of notices sent out in each State, as well as copy of each of the two notices.)

CMS has become aware that, in some cases, the intended recipients of the letters received empty envelopes. We believe this is a very limited problem and a random one that is not concentrated in any given State. The letters do not include any personal information beyond the address on the envelope; so, in the event that two letters had been stuffed into one envelope, no sensitive data would have been shared inadvertently. We are continuing to monitor the problem closely, along with other issues that may arise with a mailing of this size.

CMS is strongly encouraging our partners, including State Medicaid Agencies, State Health Insurance Assistance Programs (SHIPs), and community-based organizations, to direct any inquiries about the letter, including people who report receiving an empty envelope, to 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227). TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048. The customer service representatives (CSRs) at 1-800-MEDICARE will ask further questions of callers to determine if they have Medicare and Medicaid or get help from Medicaid paying their Medicare premiums. A CSR will then authenticate the individual and check our records to verify whether the caller is deemed eligible for the low-income subsidy. If they are, the CSR will read pre-approved language that conveys the content of the letter. This way, we can both ensure that people who qualify for extra help can immediately get accurate and consistent information, and identify any further problems with the mailing. Keep in mind that CMS is planning future communications with these individuals, most of whom will receive an auto-enrollment notice this fall.

We appreciate your willingness to work hand-in-hand with us to make this program a success. For more information, visit:

<http://www.cms.hhs.gov/medicarereform/msp.pdf>

<http://www.cms.hhs.gov/medicarereform/ssiletter.pdf>

<http://www.cms.hhs.gov/medicarereform/duals.pdf>

or

[http://www.cms.hhs.gov/medicarereform/states/lis\\_deemed\\_notices.pdf](http://www.cms.hhs.gov/medicarereform/states/lis_deemed_notices.pdf)